

SAFETY ALERT

NAMETAG DEFILADE

Within the last year, two soldiers have died in accidents because they were not following established procedures during the operation of a combat vehicle. In the first accident, a M1A1 tank commander (TC) lost his life when his tank slid off a concrete turn pad and rolled over, crushing the TC in the process. While there are other factors involved in this accident, the TC was not at nametag defilade. The second accident occurred when a Bradley commander, standing waist defilade in the commander's hatch, received a fatal blow to the face from a tree limb that was 22 inches in circumference. Had this soldier been at nametag defilade, the branch would have passed harmlessly over his head rather than crushing it.

Interviews conducted by the accident investigation teams in both accidents revealed that the soldiers in both units involved knew the standard of nametag defilade when standing in the hatch of combat vehicles. Furthermore, most soldiers understood the reasons for maintaining nametag defilade: less exposure to enemy fire and ease of dropping down in the vehicle while conducting rollover drills. Despite knowledge of the standard, leaders in both accidents condoned the actions of the vehicle commanders who failed to maintain the nametag defilade standard.

This hazard is not unique to M1 series tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles. This same hazard can pose serious risk to soldiers operating trucks with ring mounted weapons, HMMWVs with pintle-mounted weapons, FAASVs, M109s, recovery vehicles and many other tracked / wheeled vehicles. Leaders at all levels must identify the risk associated with soldiers standing in the hatches of vehicles and strictly enforce the nametag defilade standard. Furthermore, vehicle occupants and crews must rehearse rollover drills to the point where it becomes second nature for the soldiers standing in hatches to drop down and brace for a rollover situation.

The nametag defilade standard is as old as tracked vehicles themselves, but still requires constant enforcement by leaders at all levels. Strict enforcement of the nametag defilade standard **WILL** save our soldiers lives in both combat and training environments.

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